

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA  
Charlottesville Division

JULIA C. DUDLEY, CLERK  
BY: Heidi Wheeler  
DEPUTY CLERK

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,	)	
	)	Criminal No. 3:16-cr-00018
	)	
v.	)	<b><u>REPORT &amp; RECOMMENDATION</u></b>
	)	
AHMED THAMER DARWEESH AL-ANI,	)	
Defendant.	)	By: Joel C. Hoppe
	)	United States Magistrate Judge

This case was referred to the undersigned magistrate judge for the purpose of conducting a felony guilty plea hearing. This report and recommendation is submitted to the presiding district judge pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(3). The defendant waived the right to plead before a United States District Judge and consented to proceed before the undersigned magistrate judge.

On October 20, 2016, the defendant appeared with counsel before the magistrate judge, who personally addressed the defendant in open court and admonished the defendant pursuant to Rule 11(b)(1)(A)–(O) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. Discussing the district judge's role of determining a sentence, the Court explained to the defendant that a presentence investigation report had been prepared and a range of imprisonment and fine under the Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding, had been provided in the report. The Court further advised the defendant that the district judge would determine the applicable guidelines range of imprisonment and fine at the sentencing hearing, that the district judge had the authority to impose a sentence more or less severe than called for in the guidelines, and that the sentence the defendant receives may be different than any estimate given by his attorney. The Court also admonished the defendant that if the district judge does not accept a recommendation set forth in the plea agreement, the defendant will still be bound by his plea and will have no right to withdraw it. The defendant stated that he understood the Court's admonishments. The essential

terms of the plea agreement, which has been filed with the Court, were stated by the attorney for the government, and the defendant and his counsel agreed that those in fact were the terms of the agreement. Additionally, the attorney for the Government stated in open court that the Government will not ask for a sentence of imprisonment of greater than six months. The defendant stated that the plea agreement had been read to him and he understood it. Accordingly, the undersigned finds that the defendant understands the charge to which he is pleading guilty and that his plea was knowingly made. Fed. R. Crim. P. 11(b)(1).

The Court also addressed the defendant personally as to his competency to plead and the voluntariness of his plea, specifically whether it resulted from force, threats, or promises other than promises made in a plea agreement or in open court. Fed. R. Crim. P. 11(b)(2). Based on this discussion, the undersigned finds the defendant to be sufficiently competent to enter a plea, that he desired to plead guilty, and that his plea was voluntary.

The government presented a statement of facts, which has been filed with the Court, regarding the offense to which the defendant pleaded guilty. The statement of facts is signed by the attorney for the Government, but not the defendant. The defendant testified that the statement of facts had been read to him and that he had discussed the statement of facts with his attorney. He agreed that paragraphs three through five of the statement of facts were accurate and did not contest those facts. Counsel for the defendant stated that paragraphs three through five addressed the offense to which the defendant pleaded guilty, and the attorney for the Government did not disagree. Having reviewed the statement of facts, I find that paragraphs three through five provide a sufficient factual basis for the defendant's guilty plea to the charge. Fed. R. Crim. P. 11(b)(3).

The defendant pleaded guilty to the offense of encouraging or inducing an illegal alien to come to the United States, in violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1324(a)(1)(A)(iv), as alleged in Count One of the Superseding Information.

The magistrate judge finds the following:

1. The defendant's guilty plea was taken by the undersigned subject to the acceptance of the plea and sentencing by the assigned district judge and after the defendant consulted with an attorney and executed oral and written waivers;
2. The defendant fully understands the nature of the charge and relevant penalties;
3. The defendant fully understands the terms of the plea agreement;
4. The defendant understands the defendant's constitutional and statutory rights and wishes to waive those rights;
5. The defendant's guilty plea was freely and voluntarily tendered;
6. The defendant is sufficiently competent to enter a guilty plea; and
7. An adequate factual basis exists to support this plea.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The magistrate judge RECOMMENDS that the district judge accept the plea of guilty and, after reviewing the pre-sentence investigation report, accept the plea agreement and enter a final judgment finding the defendant guilty.

#### **RELEASE OR DETENTION PENDING SENTENCING**

After entry of the plea, the undersigned conducted proceedings to determine the defendant's custody status pursuant to the standard set forth in 18 U.S.C. § 3143(a). Based on the following, the undersigned finds that clear and convincing evidence does not exist that the defendant is not likely to flee or pose a danger to the community if released:

The defendant has been held in pretrial detention and did not request release.

**NOTICE TO PARTIES**

Notice is hereby given to the parties of the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C):

Within fourteen days after being served with a copy [of this Report and Recommendation], any party may serve and file written objections to such proposed findings and recommendations as provided by rules of court. A judge of the court shall make a de novo determination of those portions of the report or specified proposed findings or recommendations to which objection is made. A judge of the court may accept, reject, or modify, in whole or in part, the findings or recommendations made by the magistrate judge. The judge may also receive further evidence or recommit the matter to the magistrate judge with instructions.

Failure to file timely written objections to these proposed findings and recommendations within 14 days could waive appellate review. At the conclusion of the 14 day period, the Clerk is directed to transmit the record in this matter to the Honorable Glen E. Conrad, Chief United States District Judge.

The Clerk shall send certified copies of this Report and Recommendation to all counsel of record.

ENTER: October 21, 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel C. Hoppe".

Joel C. Hoppe  
United States Magistrate Judge